HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

The Christian Century

PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

VOLUME 1 | CHICAGO, OCTOBER, 1929 | NUMBER 1

IN THIS ISSUE

Charles E. Jefferson
Broadway Tabernacle, New York City
"A Surprising Question — a Disappointing Answer"

Frederick W. Norwood
City Temple, London
"If They Should Be Written Every One"

Merton S. Rice
Metropolitan Methodist Church, Detroit, Mich.
"The Divine Pledge"

Harry Emerson Fosdick
Riverside Church, New York City
"If Jesus Were a Modernist"

Joseph Fort Newton
Memorial Church of St. Paul, Overbrook, Philadelphia
"The Sermon"

S. Parkes Cadman
Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn
"Christ and Caesar"

Charles P. Anderson
Episcopal Bishop of Chicago
"Religion and Life"

HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

"The Sermon"

BY JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

"By the foolishness of preaching." 1 Corinthians: 1:12.

LUCUS VAN LEYDEN, an early Dutch artist, has a striking little painting entitled "The Sermon," which is at once a picture and a parable of the preaching office. The intent of the artist has been a topic of debate, since it is hardly possible that he selected the sermon hour in church merely to display a group of portraits, as that would betray a callousness in respect to sacred things. No, either he meant to portray the plight of the preacher in his day, or else to rebuke the attitude of the church toward the sermon, as counting for nothing; or for very little; the service being everything—and of that, chiefly the one act by the priest. At any rate, as has been many times made plain, if the church treats the pulpit with contempt, it is sure to have a contemptible pulpit.

The painting shows us a large church or cathedral, with its pillars and arches, its somber interior in contrast with the bright, sunny world outside, where the tide of events flows by. In the background, far withdrawn, one sees dimly the sanctuary and the high altar, unattended, as if preaching and worship were divorced. In front of the church, in the courtyard, a well-dressed man is distributing food to the sick and needy. Did the artist feel that the church of his day was remote from the people, out of touch with their bitter struggle for bread, forgetting that while man cannot live by bread alone, yet he must have bread for the body as well as for the soul? Often one feels that it is the other way round in our day, when the church is so involved in the life of the world that it has no Bread of God for man.

In the foreground is the nave; there is a service in

25 Cents a Copy | Entry as second-class matter applied for at PostOffice at Chicago, Ill., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published monthly by The Christian Century Press, 440 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. | Two Dollars a Year

1929-32 1050

progress, and it is sermon time. A thin, ascetic priest is bending over the pulpit, with his hands outstretched, preaching very earnestly to a congregation of twenty or thirty, who are arranged in groups; some standing, a few sitting on chairs or stools. It is a languid congregation, not one of whom is looking at the preacher, or apparently paying any attention to what he is saying, except perhaps a few sturdy citizens, one of whom is the artist himself, who are half-listening. The pulpit is an odd affair, just large enough to hold the preacher, and he is slight of figure. Is it a symbol of the narrow restraint imposed upon the pulpit of that day, limiting its teaching to harmless homilies on unearthly things, forcing it to deal with ancient dogmas, or else lose itself in a finespun mysticism which floated like a mist over the heads of the people, and never with living issues of the day? Or had the pulpit itself retreated into the past and become a mere echo of a faith no longer vital? One can hardly think so, because the preacher is so passionately in earnest. Yet something has removed the preacher from his people, either his fault or their indifference; his figure seems smaller than his hearers, as if he were some way off.

The Hungry Sheep Are Not Fed

The pulpit is raised a good many feet from the ground by an inadequate stem, like a tub on top of a peg, reached by a rickety ladder with rungs rather far apart; it must have been quite a feat for the preacher to enter it. But the physical handicaps under which the preacher is laboring are as nothing in comparison with the spiritual difficulties which beset him. Men, women and little children are facing every direction but towards the pulpit; all are looking out of the picture at the spectator—all, except the preacher. There are several mothers with babies, and one or two Sisters wearing the big white hoods of an order of nuns. One old lady, with a queer little owlet on her headdress, is deep in sleep, her hands folded. Another woman, with what looks like a huge blue-bottle in her headgear, is dozing quietly. The gesture and expression of the preacher show that he is speaking of things which are realities to him, seeking to share with his hearers the secrets of his soul; yet no one is so much as looking at him. "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed," cried Milton; but the people in the picture do not look up.

Yet the people are there, as they are in our churches, or many or few; some from force of habit, others as a tiresome duty or an act of condescension; and still others, it may be, drawn by some nameless need, seeking what they have been unable to find in any satisfying quantity or quality in life. The sheer marvel of it passes the power of words to describe, if one has eyes to see. Folk of many families, walking many scattered ways—their faces like glimpses of a landscape in the mist, suggesting hidden hills and vales—gather about a pulpit, like doves at the prophet's window. He is a strange man, and no preacher at all, who is not touched with wonder and awe by a company of human souls, knowing the work of God in each lonely heart—a work always going on, always important, as various as the infinite varieties of lives, as urgent as their need, as continuing as night and day. He may not know them, and yet if he looks into his own heart he knows them all, for are they not his kith and kin, with hopes and fears and faiths like his own? They are there to be awakened to awareness of the spiritual world; there to be led and lifted into the higher air of God, where they can see more clearly and find some thread of meaning in their tangled days; there seeking some glint or gleam to glorify the drabness of the common task; there to learn how to live, how to love, how to hope, despite the tramp of heavy years. Ay, though they may not be aware of it, they are there to be baptized with a vision of blessedness and the benediction of beauty.

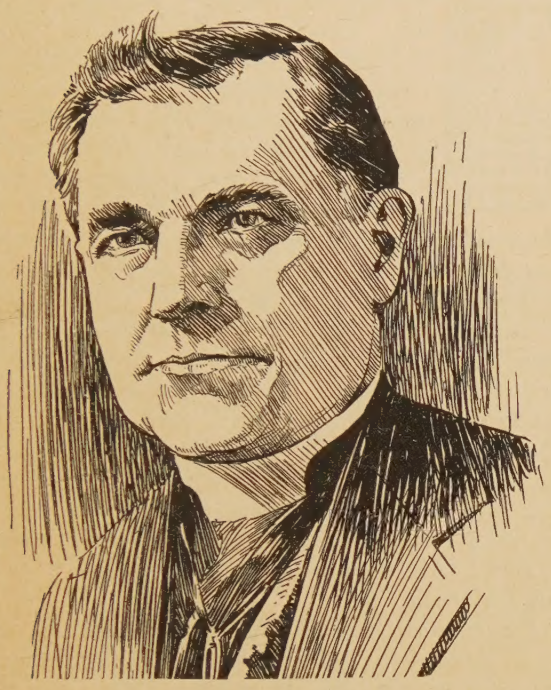
Surely no man who speaks to his fellow men has a task more taxing, or more thrilling, than the preacher. As in the congregation in the picture, all sorts of folk attend his ministry: youth with its troubled dreams or its savage cynicism, mid-life with its faded idealism or its hard realism, age with its prophetic faith or its set, gray, apathetic resignation; all types of mind, all degrees of culture, all stages of development—pilgrims at every turn of the human journey. There is no common mind, no common understanding, only a common need, and what will interest some is sure to bore or bewilder others. Yet the preacher must deal with the most elusive issues of faith and the hidden secrets of the inner life, seeking to make intangible realities real, and impalpable values vivid. His message has to do with the most intimate affairs of the human heart—things we say to no one and allow no one to say to us, save in the most confidential friendship—yet the awful privacy of the pulpit not only permits, but invites, the closest touch of soul upon soul, and the opening of heart to heart. Truly no other form of speech known among men asks for such delicacy of insight and acumen, such exquisite tact, taste, and tenderness of understanding.

Preaching a Sacrament

No wonder a great council of the church affirmed that preaching is a sacrament, as in very truth it is, despite its failings. By the same token, to belittle it, much less to ignore it—pushing it off to one side, as in the picture—is nothing short of sacrilege. The office of the ministry is sacramental, and as such it belongs to a man by virtue not only of his temperament, his poetic gift and his passion for humanity, but also, and much more, by his heroic quest of holiness. It is a creative office, in that it has to do with those facts in which men set their faith and in which they find the truth, fashioning the stuff of life into shapes of moral beauty. It is the unveiling of spiritual experience in an illuminated life, bringing healing to the old hurt and heartache of man, and light to those in darkness. By as much as the soul of the preacher is ennobled and made transparent by discipline, by devotion, by daring adventures of faith, by so much does he serve his high calling. The test of any sermon is not its eloquence, not its learning, nor yet its artistry, but the regenerative note that is in it, conveying the living word of

God to living men, through a tender, triumphant, ministrant love. O my soul, remember!

When one looks more closely at the pulpit in the picture, one sees no reading-desk, not even a ledge on which to lay a Bible, a breviary, or a sermon, or so much as a sheet of notes. If only it were so everywhere; for surely if a preacher cannot remember his sermon long enough to preach it, nobody will remember it long after it is preached. At least the preacher in the picture is not reading from a manuscript; he is too earnest, too eager—his heart is on fire. No doubt his sermon has been thought out—or, better still,



JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

wrought out—in his heart, but he is speaking with the directness and freedom of a man on the hustings. Often one half wishes that it were impossible for a sermon to be read, if only the preacher might be set free to look his people in the eyes, and talk of things he knows too well to forget; might feel the pull and play of soul upon soul and know the revelation of a united yearning for the Reality, to which all are aspiring. Such preaching is talking about God—nay, with God—in company with those who are longing to be aware of him, and of one another in his presence, as simply, as naturally, and as intimately as one talks with a friend. If it makes the sermon less a product of one mind than the fruit of fellowship, in which many share, it also makes it a Holy Communion of seeking souls in quest of him who is the end of all desire, and the one beauty we were sent to seek.

In 1720 the Church of Scotland, in its assembly, declared the reading of sermons to be displeasing to the people of God and an obstruction to the gospel. If there are exceptions to the rule, as all admit, they only prove the rule. With which agrees the wisdom of the Church of Rome in training its orders of preaching friars, many of whom are among the noblest preachers of our day. Those who have heard any of the great dominicans of our generation, in Paris or elsewhere, can testify to the rush and freedom and fire of their sermons. There is no flowery emptiness in their preaching, no vapory rhetoric, no pious pap. They speak as men who are looking straight at the truth and telling it vividly, without sacrificing either candor or caution. Ever and again, by the mercy of God, a man appears who is neither fluent nor fiery, whose eloquence is austere and uncolorful, but who speaks with an intense stillness so searching that the souls of men shudder, and then rejoice, as when deep answers to deep. So Tauler preached at Strassburg, and Newman at Oxford; and if one were to describe some of their sermons in the language of the Bible, he might truly say that "the place was shaken."

Speaking Against the Wind

Still, for all his earnestness and eloquence, the preacher in the picture has an impassive, unattentive, even stolid congregation—so hard is it to give bread to people who prize it no more than stone. How hard, how costly it is in agony of soul only the preacher himself, and those nearest to him, ever really know. Yet so it is, often, through no fault of the preacher, but due to the fact that he is speaking against the wind, and his words are blown away. There are times, even whole generations, when the race of men—save a few elect who never let the fire go out—seem deaf to the faiths and truths that make it worth our time to live. But only for a time; old hungers and thirsts revive, old memories and longings begin to stir, and man returns from "a far country" haggard and aweary. Bernard of Cluny said in 1150 that "the world is very evil and the times are waxing late"; but Francis and his friars were only a few years away, bringing a gospel of purity, pity and joy. In 1726 Bishop Butler said, as so many are saying today, "It is come to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much a subject for inquiry but now at length discerned to be fictitious"; yet Wesley was at the door with a white fire in his heart. There is an ebb and flow of faith in the heart of man, like the tide, and the preacher in the picture is standing in the midst of an ebb-tide, as we are today.

None the less he goes on speaking, even if none, or only a few, will listen, bearing his witness in spite of indifference; as his brothers must do in our day, when faith has grown dim and many will not hear. Nor will he give up and let go of his faith, as some are wont to do, much less lower the ideal of his office by so much as one iota, whatever the temptation, lest he be found unfaithful. If only one might hear the preacher in the picture, and the tones of his voice as he pleads with his people, it would help us to feel the atmosphere of his personality and the emphasis of his insight. Even his beseeching figure seen afar off, half-hidden in the dimness, is arresting, and we are aware of his winsomeness, no less than of the high purpose of his appeal. Like every other preacher, he has only one sermon to preach, no matter what text or title he is using, or how often he may alter it. His real sermon is the

story of his heart, the truth made real in his life and vivid in his vision, and he can tell no other triumphantly. Is it because he is not telling *his* truth—the truth learned by living and nearest to his heart—that his people are drowsy and will neither hear nor heed?

The Pulpit Not a Forum

Many questions of a sort similar one asks about the preacher in the picture, as his sermon goes on, falling upon ears that hear not. One thing is plain, he is not arguing issues in the minds of his people, else they would be awake and alert, eager to hear and ready to refute his logic if it did not fit the fact as they see it. But is it the purpose of preaching, as some hold today, to discuss in the pulpit the problems of the pew? As a point of contact, yes; though, as often as otherwise, it digs up more snakes than it kills. What if the preacher makes his pulpit a forum and wins the debate, as he may easily do, since no one may reply to his arguments; of what use is it unless he has a deeper vision to lead the way where logic does not go? Of course he must aid his people in their difficulties, as God gives him light, but how can he do it most fruitfully? By arguing with them, or by sharing with them a clearer insight by which all are lifted to a level where our questions are either answered, or shown to be foolish? How strange it is to forget that in the life of the spirit there are no arguments; only discernments.

What is the secret of a real sermon, not a mere homily but the voice of a man who has won his way through to serenity, vision, and beauty? Nobody knows. It is a mystery past finding out, save by those who have a heart for high adventure and do not turn back. The wind of God blows; its sound is heard but its source is secret. It is not in rich learning, or skill of training, or quickness of psychological perception, or splendor of oratory, useful as such gifts may be. No; manifestly the secret lies farther back and deeper down, where no analysis can penetrate—in the soul of the preacher, spirit-born and love-illumined, his lips touched by a living coal from an unseen Altar. He is a man like the rest, but different; he hears "another Drummer," as Thoreau used to say of himself, not knowing how deep his words went. St. Paul put it in one sentence, telling all that words may report of things for which words were never made: "Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father."

Our compassion goes out to the preacher in the picture; one does not believe that he is a dull preacher—only the ears of men are dull, stuffed with doubt and deadened by the din of the world. Leaning over his rickety pulpit, at some risk, he is pleading with his people, pressing them to take a gift which he deems more precious than life, his arm outstretched, as if holding the treasure at the moment in his hand, and he will not be satisfied until every one has got possession of it. Even after the sermon is over, and he is about to pronounce the blessing, one expects to see him break out afresh in some new entreaty, as Chalmers used to do, unwilling to let his people go until he has made one more effort to persuade them to accept the gift of God.

A Surprising Question —a Disappointing Answer

By Charles E. Jefferson

Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Go and show John the things which ye do hear and see.—Matt. XI, 3-4.

THE question was asked by John the Baptist. The answer was given by Jesus of Nazareth. It is an amazing question because of the person out of whose mouth it came. It was asked by the man who first of all discerned in Jesus of Nazareth the person of the Messiah, the man who boldly proclaimed Jesus as the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world, the man who turned the eyes of the crowd to the prophet of Galilee, awakening in them high expectations, and who spoke the word which kindled the hearts of two young fishermen into the flame of discipleship. It was John the Baptist who had said, "I baptize you with water, but this man will baptize you with fire." It was John who had said, "He must increase but I must decrease." He was the one man in the whole world who seemed to be surest of the messiahship of Jesus, and now his assurance has evaporated and he asks the pathetic question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"

The question becomes still more astounding when we think of John's character. He was an inflexible man, a man who did not waver. Other men were mercurial, fluctuating, fickle, but John was like granite. Nothing could move him. One reason why the multitude went after him was because of his tenacity of will. He was a giant whom the wind of popular opinion could not bend. He was a hero whom the treasures of kings' palaces could not buy. He was one of God's greatest prophets, filling a position of responsibility and honor which no other prophet had been permitted to occupy. But this indomitable and unswervable servant of the Lord has changed his mind. His tone of confidence has vanished. His accent of certainty is gone. He no longer deals in affirmations. He has begun to ask questions. "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"

THE CHANGE IN JOHN

Here then, we face a psychological problem of large dimensions. How can we account for this change in John? Something has happened. John's environment has been altered. A man's views are colored more or less by his surroundings. For months John had reveled in the full blaze of noon and one day he was suddenly cast into a dungeon. His cell was dark and damp and cold. The days were long and the nights were longer still. The prison dampness chilled his spirit. The prison darkness seeped into his mind. In

solitude the mind feeds on itself. In darkness hopes fade out and doubts spawn and multiply. When the universe is going our way the soul is confident, but when the universe apparently turns against us we limp and falter. Popularity is a tonic which quickens the pulse. Success tones up the nerves of the mind. Repeated victories make us sure of our step. But when the stars in their courses fight against us the heart becomes timorous and we grow distrustful of our intuitions and convictions.

John the Baptist had stirred the people as no other preacher had stirred them for generations. He was a magnet and had drawn thousands through long distances to hang upon his lips. He had transformed human lives by the word of his mouth. God was evidently with him. This gave him fresh insight and assurance, but in the darkness of the dungeon there was time to reflect. He could study the movements of his mind and heart. He could examine at his leisure the data on which he had built his hopes.

THE KING AND THE PROPHET

Facts which looked solid in the sunlight became flimsy fancies in the prison gloom. He found himself asking questions. "Was I possibly mistaken in proclaiming Jesus as the Christ? Did I rightfully interpret the signs of the times? Was I in error in my reading of the ancient Scriptures? Was I carried forward by the fervor of my emotion into statements which lack foundation?" These were the questions which kept running through his mind. If Jesus were indeed the Messiah, why did not the Messiah show his power by opening the prison door? John was in prison solely because he had done his duty. Why should not the Messiah stand up for a man who had done his duty? John had condemned Herod because Herod had cast off his faithful wife in order to marry the wife of his brother. Because he was a king no one had dared to rebuke him.

In those days kings had the divine right to do wrong. It was treason to criticize a king. The only man who dares to criticize a king is a prophet. A prophet speaks for God. He announces the judgment of God. He is not awed by the crown of a king because he is the servant of the King of Kings. He is not afraid of society because he is the slave of his conscience. John was a prophet and as a prophet he rebuked Herod the king. He said in a tone which could be distinctly heard through all Palestine, "It is not right for you to live with the divorced wife of your brother." It was a word which cut deep into the heart of the king, but it cut deeper into the heart of Herodias. John was promptly cast into prison. He did not know what day might be his last. He was at the mercy of a woman whose heart knew no pity. But Jesus did not come to his rescue. Jesus did not seem to be interested in his suffering. Jesus did not show any concern for the safety of the man who had befriended him and who had introduced him to the nation.

Could such a man be the Messiah? The Messiah of whom the prophets had dreamed was a man who loved justice and whose delight was to right wrongs. The world had for centuries been longing for justice, but every king had been impotent to execute justice, and so the human heart had kept on dreaming of an ideal king whom God would certainly send to establish upon the earth the kingdom of justice. Jesus is here, but he is apparently indifferent to justice. He talks about justice but makes no effort to secure its enforcement. He is seemingly content to have an innocent man languish in a dungeon and will not lift up so much as a finger to set the prisoner free. Could Jesus then be the Messiah, or must the world look for someone else?

CHARLES E. JEFFERSON

If it is said to be incredible that a true prophet of the Lord should feel certain of the messiahship of Jesus, only to have that conviction later on crumble to pieces, it must be borne in mind that convictions concerning things physical differ from convictions in regard to things spiritual. For instance, we are sure that if we throw a stone into the air it will fall to the earth. We are sure of that on every day in the week. No matter what our mood may be we are continuously certain. It makes no difference what experiences we may be passing through. Our conviction is not modified by our experiences. The conviction that gravitation will always be operative in bringing a stone back to the earth again is one that is not susceptible to change. The degree of certainty does not fluctuate and nothing that man can say or do is able to modify our conviction.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONVICTIONS

But in the realm of the spiritual we are to a certain extent the victims of the weather. Our beliefs are always coming up and going down. Our faith is not constant, nor is our hope unchanging. In our normal mood we feel quite certain that it pays to do right.

We are more certain of this, however, at some times than we are at other times. We thought we had settled that point forever, and then one day something happened which gave us a jolt. We heard the story of a man who had done right and who had lost by it. Later on we saw another man do right and lose much. In the course of the years we have heard of many men and women who have tried to do right and who have suffered loss and defeat, and we sometimes wonder if it is universally and everlastingly true that it pays to do right. Paul says that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Sometimes we believe it, and then again we wonder.

We have seen so many cases in which things have not worked together for the good of godly people that we are not always strong enough to affirm that the apostle was right. "God is love." The Bible says so and we like to believe it. We want to believe it. On some days we really do succeed in believing it, but on other days we are uncertain. We have seen tragedies so cruel that in their presence it seemed absurd to say that God is love. We have seen innocent people suffer so much, and invalid men and women experience such physical torture that the doctrine of the divine love has seemed at times an insult or a joke. With the sunbeams falling on us we are radiant believers, but when we are shut up in the dungeon of Machaerus we find ourselves asking questions.

We cannot believe that God is displeased by such questions. Even Jesus one day fell into the dungeon of Machaerus and asked God a question which seemed to contradict the teaching of Jesus' whole life. "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" You say, a strange question for the Son of God to ask. He asked it because he was in darkness and had no language but a cry. There are experiences which slap our faith so hard in the face that all the bewildered mind can do is to ask a question. Jesus did not reprimand John the Baptist for his question. He understood him. He sympathized with him. He answered him.

THE DISAPPOINTING ANSWER

The answer, however, is disappointing. John has asked him a direct question. It deserves a clear answer. It is the earnest question of an honest man. It demands a straightforward reply. It is the agonizing query of a suffering friend. It calls for a swift and unequivocal response. It is the kind of question which can be answered by Yes or No. But Jesus seems to evade the question. He is apparently noncommittal. All he says is, "Go, tell John what you hear and see." What comfort John got out of such an answer, we do not know. It certainly does not at first satisfy us. But like many another saying of Jesus, this answer grows upon us as we ponder it.

When we lay our mind on it the sentence unfolds and we gradually discover its divine wisdom. We come to see what a complete answer it is. We see that it is the only satisfying answer which could have been given. Jesus points to the wonderful and beautiful things which are taking place where he is at work, and in these achievements he tells John to find the evidence that the Messiah has come. Jesus is doing the things which mankind has always wanted done. He is lifting the burdens which humanity has groaned under. He is breaking the scourges and vanquishing the curses. He is doing the very things which the human family needs to have done. He must be in very truth the Messiah.

Why should we today spend our time in thinking about a question and an answer written in a book two thousand years old? It is because that same question is up today. All over the world the question is in men's mouths, "Is Jesus of Nazareth the Savior of mankind, or must we look for another?" Why does the question arise? It is because Jesus does not break the power of Herod Antipas. He does not curb the influence of Herodias. He does not release John the Baptist from prison. Injustices are still perpetrated. Crimes are still committed and criminals go unwhipped. Innocence languishes in chains and Jesus does nothing. His church does nothing. His church goes right on talking about righteousness but is incapable of securing it. It preaches about love, but hate still abounds. It grows eloquent over peace, but nations go right on planning for war. It is because Jesus does not put an end to the reign of Herod and Herodias that the world keeps asking, "Must we not look for another?"

A VAST UNREST

In every land there is today a vast unrest. Many eyes are looking in all directions, straining to see a face which is long overdue. Impatient hearts are longing for the appearance of someone able to save us from our distresses. There are some who think our deliverance will come through science. Science, they say, is to be the world's Messiah. Others are sure that philosophy has the key that will unlock the door of a golden future. Still others see in the new psychology the way of salvation. New Thought is hailed as a possible deliverer by many who have lost faith in all the ancient creeds. Others turn wistfully toward the distant East, wondering if perhaps the world's sickness may not be healed by the wisdom of Oriental sages. Ours is a wistful and inquiring generation, and the deepest question of our day is this, Is Christianity the perfect and final religion or is it only anticipatory of a higher religion yet to come? Is Jesus the one supreme Savior of the world, or must we look for another?

What answer can be given? Only the answer given nineteen hundred years ago, "The blind receive their sight. The lame walk. The lepers are cleansed. The deaf hear. The dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." In every part of the world where the spirit of Jesus is free to work, those wondrous and mighty works appear. The eyes of men are opened and they see things which they had never seen before. Lame men stand on their feet and walk into the temple praising God. Men who were foul are cleansed and minds which were vile are made pure. The deaf have their ears opened. Men dead in heart and spirit come to life again, and to the poor the message of love is spoken. What more can a Messiah do

than this? What more can a Messiah ever do? This then, is the answer of the Christian church to all inquirers, it is the perfect and final answer: The proof of Christianity is Christianity itself. The divinity of Christ is evidenced by what he does.

MIGHTY, BUT ONLY FOR A DAY

What shall we say then of Herod? He is Herod the tetrarch, a kinglet, a petty king. His kingdom is limited and his tenure of office is brief. Our Lord called him a fox. He is the man in whom the animal predominates over the spiritual. He is mighty for a day, and only in Galilee and Peræa. He may cause the near-sighted perplexity, but those who see far are not dismayed by him. Herodias, his wife, still retains her charm. She and her husband cut a shining figure, but the fascination of a marble-hearted woman is ephemeral and the palace of Herod will some day be deserted. John the Baptist must remain for a season in prison. In a world like this such things must be. The innocent must suffer. Virtue must lie for a time in a dungeon while vice gives commands from the throne. All this is only for a day. It is through the suffering of the good that the bad are overthrown. The prison doors will some day swing open and the last of the Lord's prisoners will be set free. A man has appeared in human history who was sure the spirit of God was upon him because he was impelled to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to recover sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Wherever the spirit of that Man is permitted to do its perfect work the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised, and the poor are exalted. God leads the world to higher levels through processes which are incalculably extended. But in him there is no variableness, nor does he ever surrender his purposes. Through the ages he works on without weariness or fainting, and while he grants Herod a fleeting sovereignty and allows Herodias to have what she wants, he never fails through his son to open blind eyes and unstop deaf ears and bestow upon the dead the gift of an endless life.

A Pulpit Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

ETERNAL spirit, from whom we come, to whom we belong, and in whose service is our peace, we worship Thee. Thou art very great. We cannot by searching find Thee out. Before ever Thou didst form the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God. Yet, blessed be Thy name, though Thou art very great, Thou art very near. Like the wind that blows about the world yet fans our cheek also, so art Thou. Like the springtime that brings life anew to all the earth yet brings the flowers into our garden also, so art Thou. Like the sun that, swinging all the planets, lights our eyes too, so art Thou.

O God, who art very great, lift up the hearts of Thy people, that each of us in the secret place of his inner sanctuary may say in this hour, O God, Thou art my God.

Play, we beseech Thee, upon all the chords of our lives. We who so often have placed ourselves at the disposal of the world's fingers to play upon, would in this hour come before Thee that Thy Spirit might touch the strings of our hearts.

Play upon our gratitude. If we have held our complaining so close to our eyes that we have lost the far perspectives of Thy favor, grant, we pray Thee, for the reward of our worship, true horizons in this morning hour. Remind us of the homes we came from, of the fathers and mothers who nourished us, of the better aspects of the civilization out of which we have come, of our heritage of great books, great music, great art, of the causes once defeated, now victorious, for which others shed their blood. Teach us once again that we are not our own, that we have been bought with a price, that we may go forth to make our lives part payment on an unpayable debt.

Play, we beseech Thee, upon our nobler fears. O Thou who hast given us the power of foresight, teach us anew the lesson of the springtime, that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. If there are lives or families here already treading the pathway of careless dalliance which, pleasant now, must find its end in the valley of death, awake in us, we beseech Thee, a holy awe of this law-abiding universe that so inexorably moves from cause to consequence.

Play, we beseech Thee, upon our loves. Awaken within us the too dull spirit of friendship and goodwill. Save us from our vindictiveness, our disillusionment, and cynicism. If some men have wronged us, help us afresh to see how some have blessed us. Kindle again the fire upon the hearthstone of our better selves. Let benevolence, magnanimity, tolerance and friendliness have possession of our souls.

Strike, also, we beseech Thee, the sterner chords. Awaken our devotions. O God, we pray Thee for work to do, good work and strength to do it with. Send us out into this great generation where no man need waste his life, to find our tasks in the church and in the state and in the worldwide fraternity of humankind, that because we have lived and thought and toiled this earth may be a more decent place for Thee to raise Thy children in.

So play upon us, Spirit of the living God. Let all our hearts awake to praise Thy name and then may we go forth to serve Thy cause.

We ask it in the name of Christ. Amen.

Christ and Caesar*

By S. Parkes Cadman

"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Mark 12:17.

OUR LORD'S timeless precept was uttered during his last visit to the temple. Three days before he was crucified as a seditionist, emissaries of the Pharisees and Herodians attempted to silence him by the thorny question: "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar?" They had themselves accepted the emperor's money, and by so doing, acknowledged his political authority. To him the tribute belonged; to him it should be paid. But Jesus seized the opening his opponents made to emphasize man's indebtedness to God's dominion. If the coinage stamped with Caesar's image and circulated in his name registered Caesar's claims, infinitely more did God's likeness engraved on human souls entitle him to every service they could pay. His supremacy was embedded in the moral consciousness of the race. It comprehended all realms of thought and being. To him persons and peoples alike owed their first allegiance. Therefore every other legitimate loyalty, whether to the home, to the state, or to the nation of which the state is the organ of expression, had its source and completion in the loyalty due to the living God and Father of all men.

History testifies that God demands truth and justice, cost what these may; that nations cooperating with him have no need to fear, while those refusing cooperation ought to fear. Indisputably states bent on carving their own way, heedless of "the things of God," wound themselves with forbidden weapons. Tragic facts which surpass the limits of tragedy repeatedly admonish us that if his rule is ignored, self-wrought ruin follows swift and sure. Our Lord's utterance is the rock on which nations either build or split; and upon whomsoever that rock falls, it grinds him to powder.

Reflective minds, aware of the sources of national catastrophe and achievement, are naturally solicitous for the state's further moralization. Because the state is ethically responsible for its behavior, if it is to live and prosper, it must "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God."

I

Assuredly Jesus gave the state a dignity and standing which his apostles seconded. When temporal rule was exercised by Nero, whose emperorship was the negation of God, St. Paul wrote the Romans: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God." Later Christian thinkers, among whom St. Thomas was preeminent, rightly argued that when the power thus derived was abused it was forfeited, and that tyrants could be deposed. In any case, as an organization the state has no earthly superior, and "will recognize no check to its sovereignty unless the people uphold the higher authority of God, whose servants all states and nations are."

A generously disposed and well governed nation has in it formative elements of worthy personal character. Through its channels runs the secret river of God's purpose, bringing

> Authentic tidings of invisible things:
> Of ebb and flow, and ever enduring power;
> And central peace, existing at the heart
> Of endless agitation.

Its outward relations with human life cannot be unduly depreciated without injury to their inward aspects. But the individual citizen is always the responsible agent of the state's progress. By him its collective good is preserved; upon him its general welfare depends. So we are morally bound to elevate the state by ennobling our political activities, and this can only be done by subordinating them to a higher spiritual control. No sentimental patriotism, however profuse, can avoid this duty. It searches the souls of men today with the candle of the Lord.

It is the more imperative because the state is the most venerable existing institution except the home. It arose out of prehistoric voids through tribalism to its present eminence. Its growth resembles that of a primeval forest—always living, dying and renewing its life. It awaits us at birth, commandeers our resources, inspires us to spend and be spent in its behalf and to die in its defense. Our love for it is deeply rooted. We toil for it like gods. Severed from it we could not cultivate the social faculties, nor properly qualify our habits and occupations. Our well-being is inconceivable apart from the state's partnership and discipline. The passion for one's country is the germinal seed of one's finer passion for humanity. Both blended in Jesus, who wept over the city which sent him to the cross before he ascended it for the salvation of the world. So long, then, as nation-building is the enterprise of statesmen, and history's halfway house, like minded groups having a common language and kindred interests rightly insist on substantial ethnic unity, territorial integrity, relative security and economic independence. We may mourn with Dante the rebellion of temporal rule against God's lordship. Yet with the poet we uphold that rule as the pledge of better things to come. Those who would outpace Providence by abrogating the state's control and protection invoke havoc and undoing. In all normal affairs, we are bound to obey the powers that be, "for they are ordained of God."

But while Christ gave the state an authority commensurate with its inestimable service and responsibility, he also restricted its functions. It could no longer claim the monopoly of allegiance assigned it by the political ideas of Greece, and confirmed by Rome's genius for their administration. The church, as Christianity's most characteristic creation, entered the scene, and injected moral considerations into politics as their abiding factor. For this reason, the new organization became the rival of the state, or else its uncongenial associate in earthly affairs. They afterward combined

* This sermon was delivered at St. Peter's Cathedral, Geneva, at the opening of the Assembly of the League of Nations, Sept. 1, 1929.

in the medieval church state only to fall apart into schism and nationalism.

II

The question whether the national state was absolute in itself pressed heavily upon the best minds of the past. They realized that the things of Caesar and of God were one in Christ; indeed, that the race was one in him—one flesh and blood, with one struggle, one defeat or one victory. They were solicitous that the church should be what she has not yet been:

S. Parkes Cadman

Christ's clearing house for national and international fellowships. They understood that her life and being were created by the will of God, not by the opinions and consent of men. Therefore, she should not debase his moral currency to profit Caesarism, nor abstain from its circulation at the behest of princes and kings.

If the individual is permanent and the state is transient, it is the height of unwisdom to sacrifice the individual's spiritual interests at the demand of the state. For this reason the history of civil and religious liberty is a history of resistance; of limitation of earthly government, not of its increase. Freedom to become whatever God purposes us to be imposes boundaries on civic authority beyond which sagacious rulers will not trespass.

I stress these fundamental truths because whether or not the national state is inherently supreme is now warmly debated. The late war was fought upon the issue, and the pacification of the nations has been delayed by it. Aggressive coteries in nearly every country postulate the deification of the state, and while the majority do not openly defend this theory, they quietly acquiesce in its practice. Here are two conflicting loyalties. If the state is absolute, what becomes of God's sovereignty and of Christ's universal gospel? If it is not absolute to what does it owe allegiance? For seven thousand years hostilities traceable to the Socratic idea of state supremacy have filled the world with inflammable stuff. For five thousand of those years the fighting male symbolized that supremacy and its defense. Rome's legions practiced the theory that war was the weapon of a virile breed chosen for dominion. But at the top of their conquests Christ's edict cancelled that theory for Christians, and its cancellation was confirmed by his solemn injunction that "they who take the sword shall perish by the sword." Then began the irrepressible conflict between the religion Rome despised as congenitally weak, and the Caesarism she worshiped as the impersonation of the all powerful state.

As it was in the beginning, so it is now. Christianity is still at odds with the remnants of a once worldwide paganism which reasserted itself in Machiavelli and the philosophers of the Renaissance. Its modern adherents adulate national sovereignty as though history were made by force, not by righteousness. Superpatriotism submerges for them the spiritual values of society, and makes the citizen the acolyte of the state. Ethics and religion are subjected to national dominance and prosperity. Cavour's axiom, "a free church in a free state," is logically discarded by zealous nationalists whose reliance in the last resort is on physical might. They ask that Christianity shall furnish apologies for temporal policies, regardless of their nature. The dictum that liberty is the assurance that "every man shall be protected in doing what he believes to be his duty against the influence of majorities, their customs and opinions," is anathema to these extremists. They would silence minorities if they could, despite the fact that the minority mind is conducive to a public intelligence otherwise impossible. So much for protagonists of state absolutism, and of its maintenance by the abuse of force in wars which have no more virtue in them than the medieval trial by fire.

III

Christians have bowed in this house of Rimmon long enough. Toleration of principles and practices which flatly contradict the mind which was in Christ Jesus should end for his disciples here and now. The obdurate paganism fed by tradition, temperament, education and collective sentiment has to be stoutly opposed as the most formidable obstacle to the extension of God's kingdom, to the safety of the nations, and to the welfare of mankind. Whatever else is uncertain, this is certitude itself, that if there is no restriction on national absolutism, Christ's governance ceases to be universal. We cannot plead ignorance of the precise difference between the nationalistic and Christian viewpoints of temporal power, or of the citizen's obligations thereto. The nationalistic viewpoint deems the state self-controlling, isolated and supreme; the custodian of its own affairs, beyond which its interests fade away unless those affairs are in question. The Christian viewpoint deems the state free and independent in its

own sphere, but obligated by that freedom and independence to exist, not solely for itself, but for humanity at large.

Our Lord had a measureless enthusiasm for humanity as a whole, and for its dissemination he created the church as a divine society for the dissemination of his measureless enthusiasm for humanity as a whole. He insisted that the interest of the whole body should be set above all personal interests. That society conceived men as one Man in Christ, the Man of the mount of transfiguration and the cross, not of the cave and the gladiatorial arena. All were sons of God, brethren beloved, suffering and rejoicing together. Their sonship was the basis and the inspiration of human brotherhood.

We are often asked why the faithful presentation of Christ as the Lord of all good life has not done away with the heartless use of force for vainglory and illicit gain. The answer is that heretofore man's inherited instincts of greed and violence have proved too strong for institutional Christianity's control. Yet one wonders how it could so long divert its energies from the field of human suffering and wrong to matters of secondary moment. The church now mobilizes against war and its causes because their hour of judgment has arrived. They can no longer escape him who neither hastes nor rests.

IV

What can we as Christians offer to God in behalf of world peace? The first thing needful is our utter sincerity of purpose to labor for it without stint. Many watch the churches with mingled expectancy and distrust, not to say scorn and derision. Some accuse them of shuffling on this question. They upbraid their pious platitudes, their trifling with a vital issue, their lack of definiteness, their subserviency to mundane patronage and influence. We must convince friend and foe that we will enter into no conspiracy to be blind to our obligations in this matter, nor imitate Balaam, who was neither a false nor a true prophet.

Again, there is a non-sacerdotal sense in which nations either remit or retain the sins of nations. Unforgiven sins are prone to persist. Forgiven sins are prone to perish in their shame. I make no apology for offenses. These will come and woe be to those by whom they come! Surely the peoples have drunk to the dregs the cup of that woe! Yet they cannot escape drinking it again unless they pardon others as they would be pardoned themselves. Common repentance for a common guilt leading to mutual reconciliation is our undischarged obligation to the Father of all mercies. Moreover, if the legal machineries for securing justice and peace are to operate effectively, Christ's gospel of pardoning grace must first sanitate the world's heart.

The church as the mediating agent of that gospel has to realign her scattered remnants that she may pay to God the oneness she owes him and the race. For if the revolt against the unconditioned state has happened, the revolt against the divided church has begun. Men will not always endure in her the cults of incompleteness and sectarian assertiveness. The Fabian tactics of ecclesiastics and their undue sensitiveness about origins and priorities will not always be allowed to interfere with her efforts to win the consent of nations to their own good. The time may not be ripe for her organic union, but it is over-ripe for her federalized action. Since her forces must still march in separate columns, at least they should mass for attack on open iniquities. The supernationalism without which her catholicity is impossible is her New Testament heritage.

Public opinion has recently crystalized in marvelous ways; none of which is more impressive than the League of Nations, the World Court, the Locarno compacts, the various peace treaties and the Kellogg pact. We dedicate them with thanksgiving to the Author of righteousness as an implicit avowal of his sovereignty. But there is far more in these institutions and instruments than brilliant statesmanship. The whole movement for peace which they express springs from a recreated ethic in men. The plain folk of every land are its projectors. Their determination for peace produced the Peace Treaty of Paris, better known as the Kellogg pact, which, with the voluntary consent of fifty signatory powers, outlaws war; thus renouncing the most ancient and potent weapon of political action.

The names of M. Briand, ex-President Coolidge, ex-Secretary Kellogg, and President Hoover are inseparably associated with this treaty. But it was born in the brain of Mr. Salmon O. Levinson, a private citizen of the United States, who enforces afresh Emerson's observation that "the only thing in the world of value is the active soul which every man contains within him." Mr. Levinson overcame formidable obstacles against the admission of his discovery that war has hitherto been the supreme legality, nurtured by and entrenched in the legal system of the world. The fundamental task of its abolition is to expel it from that system. Peace has been accelerated by this discovery, which, after much labor and pains, was finally ratified in the pact signed at Paris, officially approved and proclaimed at Washington on June the twenty-fourth of this year, the date of an act unparaleled in international annals.

The pact is criticized as purely declaratory in that it does not specify any physical means for its enforcement. In these respects it is not merely the highest statesmanship but it also resembles Christ's adventure for mankind. It relies upon the moralized intelligence of the nations it protects. It substitutes their achievements in life's real values for their military prowess. It places them upon their honor to scrupulously avoid provocative measures; and adopt those of justice and right. It provides for changes in the existing relations of states to be brought about solely by pacific means, and as the result of orderly process. No political instrument yet framed is more conducive to the integrity of nations, the unification of the peace consciousness of the race, or the understanding of our Lord's command in the text.

The publication of the peace pact gave to right-

and the world that your science is drawing together into a neighborhood you cannot transform into a brotherhood?"

INADEQUACY OF MODERNISM

Certainly Jesus would come back with some such reaction as that. A modernist, therefore, may well be concerned about the inadequacy of modernism. Take

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

this church, for example. This church could become one of the most self-satisfied and complacent of congregations. It could settle down and say, We are the people; our theology is harmonious with the new world-view. Yet how futile that would be! Do you remember that tremendous accusation which Benjamin Kidd in his book on Social Evolution levels at the intellectual and educated classes of Great Britain in the nineteenth century? He says that in the large they were on the wrong side of every great public issue of the century—extension of education, emancipation of trade, extension of the franchise, securing of religious freedom, abolition of slavery. A statement like that haunts one. We could be like that. We could know the new science, absorb our religious interest in the adjustment of our theology to the new world-view, be Simon-pure, successful modernists—and be on the wrong side of every great human issue of our time.

The other evening Mr. Sidney Hillman spoke in this pulpit. When he was a boy in Europe he intended to be a rabbi, but he came to this country and was caught up in our economic life. He became a garment worker in Chicago. He watched the way his people lived, the starvation wages they were paid, the hard methods by which they were sweated, the industrial despotism under which they toiled, the deadly fear of unemployment that haunted them. He went out to see what he could do for his people. He is president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America today. The story of the last eighteen years of that organization with its steady rise in the level of wages toward more decent standards, with its insurance against unemployment, with its substitution of democratic arbitration for autocratic despotism, with its foundation of banks to make small loans in needy cases, with its provision of apartment houses to furnish decent homes at small cost, seems to me as Christian a thing as I know about. As one heard Sidney Hillman that night make his statesmanlike statement of this humanitarian program, how could one fail to feel that Jesus Christ would be interested in that; that when we were all through talking with him about our intellectual adjustments he would be very likely to say:

"Well and good! I do not expect you to live with a divided mind. Get yourself together. But get through with that process as soon as possible, and then come out with me and watch the people, the houses they dwell in, what they have to eat, the circumstances that depress or elevate them, their capacities for abundant life, the relationships that make or unmake them. Do not be content to be up to date about things or beliefs while your human relationships are so far below the level of the golden rule."

CAN WE BE CHRISTIAN?

This aspect of the Christian message applies to many areas that we ought to be deeply concerned about. Our young people, for example. This church will not meet some of the realest needs of the best portion of this new generation unless it emphasizes this aspect of the Christian program. Some of us of the older generation were brought up in the days when theology was the problem. We were reared when higher criticism and evolution were hot questions and the new theology was in the center of the stage, and we had our tumult there. We are tempted to think that the younger generation's central problem is there also. Well, in part it is and we can help, but some of the best of these young people are asking another kind of question altogether; not so much, "Can we be Christians in the face of the intellectual difficulties?" as

"Can we be Christians in the face of the moral difficulties? Can international relationships ever be built on the principles of Jesus? Can industrial life ever be run upon his cooperative goodwill? Are the ethics of Jesus workable in ordinary modern life? We do not want to be hypocrites and what is the use of calling yourself Christian if you do not intend to put the ethics of Jesus to work in business and politics?"

So when they come to a merely modernist church and listen to merely modernist sermons about how an evolutionist can believe in God, or on miracles not being necessary to Christian faith, they say, "Old stuff! But tell us, do you really think that the principles of Jesus can ever be applied to life?" And as I understand Jesus, he would look on these young people with favorable eyes. He would say, Now you are asking a real question.

You remember how Bismarck was converted to

Christianity. He was not a Christian youth but he fell in love with a fine girl, and he was converted to Christianity. To be sure, he was converted in part in order to get the girl, but then there was a genuine area to his conversion. His affectionateness centered in his family and in that experience he discovered a certain amount of real religion. He wrote with a flare of piety when he wrote to his wife. He moved up through family love to God. But he has one revealing passage: "In politics one must, if one has many opponents, first rid oneself of the stronger by knock-out blows, and then skin the weaker—which in private life would be regarded as a mean kind of behavior." Quite so! He could be a Christian at home but when he went out into the politics of Europe, when he watched the principles on which it operated and saw what he had to do in order to come through successfully, he stopped being a Christian.

That is what troubles many of this new generation at their best. "Christians?" they say, "but Christians must take the principles of Jesus out into every area of human life—can we be Christians?"

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

I am, therefore, deeply discontented with modernism, not because I would go back on it but because I see how far beyond it we must go. Did you ever do any surveying? You start with a base line and then you push out your angles and measurements into the unsurveyed territory from that base. To take the faith and principles of Jesus as your base line and then, facing the adventurous task of surveying this strange new generation with its human relationships, to push out your survey into every area—that is Christianity when you take it seriously, and the best of the young people know it.

Again, this touches not only our young people but our national attitudes. Where is the United States? Shall we give a conventional answer? Bounded on the north by Canada, on the east by the Atlantic, on the south by Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico, on the west by the Pacific. But that is no answer. Surely, the United States is where those things are by which the United States lives. Shylock at least said this much truth:

> You take my life
> When you do take the means whereby I live.

Where, then, is the United States? It is estimated that about 13,000,000,000 dollars of our wealth is invested outside our borders. Add to that 10,000,000,000 dollars of debt and you have the enormous total of about 23,000,000,000 dollars of American wealth not in America. They are talking about a war between the United States and Great Britain. But a considerable portion of the wealth of Great Britain is in the United States and a considerable portion of the wealth of the United States is in Great Britain and her empire, and of all the choice ways of committing mutual suicide, commend me to a war with Great Britain! In a world like this and a world growing more like this every day, so that geographical boundaries are no longer the real boundaries but across them humanity is constantly being interwoven into an ever more intricate interdependence, folk are asking whether the principles of Jesus will apply. Is there anything else that will apply? Will old imperialistic policies of conquest and conflict for power apply? Will the old nationalisms apply?

You see, if the Master were here he would talk to us about his ethical program. It is exceedingly interesting to watch the day we modernists insist upon being up to date about things and about ideas. Have you read the last book? Have you seen the last play? Have you read Eddington on the new science? Do you know the latest wrinkle in theology? What an intriguing interest we have in being up to date in ideas, and as for things, let a new invention come such as radio and it sweeps like a prairie fire across the United States. But human relationships?

CHRIST AND BUSINESS

Of course, this would apply not only to young people and to the nation but to business. Sometimes one fairly envies you business men. You are living in the thick of the conflict where Christ versus Antichrist is being fought out in this modern world. And what one fears about a church like this is that it may gather to itself a large group of powerful business men who will be thankful for an opportunity to have their religion presented to them in terms harmonious with the new world-view and will sit down saying, "Here is a church I can go to without having my intellect insulted!" when one knows that if the Master were talking with such modernist churchmen he would not spend much time on theological adjustment before he went through to the economic adjustment of his principles to modern business. Most people would be amazed to learn how frequently the Master mentioned money, where it came from, how it is spent, what it does to people. Do you think he would change his emphasis if he were walking now through American life and watching business?

We would not have public lotteries in the United States, would we? If some one proposed that we should do what our fathers did in that regard, what an uproar there would be! We are not Cuba, we might say; we are the United States. And yet, we know that in dealing with speculative stocks, when we have made all the qualifications that we can think of, when we have called legitimate everything that by any stretch of the imagination can be called legitimate, and have recognized all the adventurous necessities of investment, beyond that we are running sheer gambling in the United States that touches more people, involves more financial losses, wrecks more families, debauches more youths than all the public lotteries our fathers ever ran. Can you imagine Jesus not talking about that?

One fears then about modernist churchmen that they may absorb their religious attention with their theological readjustments, whereas if the Master were here the first thing he would say would be:

"Your great chance to be Christians is inside your business: 'the light of the world,' in this economic

status quo but not of it, above the average, ahead of the time, not content to take ethical standards from current practices but raising current practices toward Christian standards."

For Christianity is an ethical adventure and when it forgets that and becomes intellectually sophisticated it has lost its authenticity.

This truth applies not simply to these various realms; it applies also to every one of us in the deep secrets of his own heart. When last I was at Assisi, I knelt long at the shrine of St. Francis and humbly said my prayers. That is a strange thing for a modernist to do, for St. Francis held a medieval world-view, a medieval theology, and a medieval ecclesiasticism. But a modernist may well kneel long at the shrine of St. Francis and remember that such creative spiritual beauty as his does not depend primarily on theological adjustment.

In Palestine I saw the spring and the brook where, according to the legend, David led his sheep when he wrote the Twenty-third Psalm. Now modernity has come in and they are concreting it, piping it, making a water works out of it; it is shut in now, engineered, and imprisoned in iron and cement. It is modernized. But no Twenty-third Psalm will ever be written there again. There is a kind of modernism that can do that to a man and to a church.

Intellectual sophistication can dry up the wells of spiritual creativity. Consider Raphael—as Ruskin interprets his art—growing amid the loveliness of his Umbrian Hills under the tutelage of Perugino and with his spontaneous creativeness producing his beautiful madonnas. Then he went to Florence, and, for a time at least, became sophisticated, tried to paint the way Michelangelo did. At any rate, Ruskin said about him, "He painted best when he knew least." Under no circumstances ought any fundamentalist ever be allowed to hear that. But a modernist might well say it to himself once a week. Raphael painted best when he knew least.

SOPHISTICATED SUPERIORITY

If a fundamentalist should talk to you as I have talked to you this morning, you would say he was attacking knowledge and retreating to mysticism. But I am a modernist. I am not attacking knowledge and I am making no cheap and easy retreat to mysticism. The problem of adjusting one's religious thinking to the modern scientific world-view has been my personal problem and in a sense it always will be, and I would not abate one jot or tittle of emphasis upon its significance. But I have watched liberal churches grow sophisticated, absorb their religious energies in theological adjustments, spend their time informing the world how up to date they are, become intellectually complacent, lose out of their religion all the passion of an ethical adventure and the deep resources of dynamic spiritual power, until they were not worth to the community what it cost to run them. May God save us from any such inglorious anticlimax!

I trust we may always have a church to which a modern-minded man can come without having his intellect insulted. Yet we know well, when we stop to think of it, what Jesus would be saying:

"Modernism? Intellectual readjustment? New world-view? Good! You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your strength and all your mind, but that is not the end of my gospel; that is only preliminary. Christianity is an ethical adventure into new human relationships and dynamic spiritual power for new life. You must be more than modernists, much more! In business, in politics, in international relationships, in social life, in personal character, the light of the world!"

"If They Should Be Written Every One"

By Frederick W. Norwood

"There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."—John xxi. 25.

THERE have been times when I have had a feeling of regret that so great a book as the fourth gospel should come to its conclusion with such a statement as that. It sounds so very amateurish, so naive and so exaggerated. One tries for a moment to make a mental estimate of how many books would need to have been written if everything that Jesus did had been recorded, and then of how many written books the world could contain—and the whole thing becomes absurd. There is no other word for it.

The evangelist was just carried away by his enthusiasm, mentally tired perhaps at the end of his superb effort, and so finished off with a thoughtless rhetorical flourish. That is all that a literary critic could fairly say. Reading the fourth gospel coolly and in a detached way, one is tempted to wish eliminated this brief but over exuberant peroration.

But there are other categories of value besides literary form. There are moments when it is legitimate to depart from strict exactitude. Whoever would test the value of this passage by a mere mathematical calculation must defend himself from the charge of stupidity. It may well be that after all, this is a profoundly interesting saying. We will let the supercilious literary critic, with his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, go strutting away, and ourselves ponder the matter a little longer.

I

First of all, it reminds us how little has really been written concerning "the things which Jesus did." We are restricted to four biographies. It is little use seeking for other contemporary writers. Taking the long backward view after nineteen hundred years, the evangelist's saying that "the world itself could not contain the books" that have been written concerning Jesus, does not sound so very absurd. Certainly, beside them

all other biographies would seem negligible in bulk. But in his own day few pens were engaged in the task. Surely there must have been some, but they have perished. Four little books only have come down to us from that day.

It is noticeable that they have little information to give concerning the longer and earlier part of his life. They take up the story at about his thirtieth year. Two references to his birth and one glimpse of him at twelve years of age are practically all we have. The story is confined to three mighty years, and even then is much more absorbed in his sayings than in his deeds.

It is generally felt that Mark gives us the earliest group of incidents in the life of Jesus. He gives us deeds rather than words. Long speeches are abbreviated. Peter, whom we suppose to have been its principal source, was a man of observant eye, too restless for sustained meditation, and he has imparted an atmosphere of activity to this book. Jesus moves and acts in these pages of Mark's gospel.

Matthew has quite obviously taken over many of these stories, sometimes in almost identical words, amplifies them by the speeches of Jesus in greater detail, and is apparently eager to show how the Master fulfilled the ancient scriptures to the end, that his Jewish readers at least might know that he is the Christ.

Luke tells us himself that his was a later writing. He pursued his own line of inquiry. One imagines that he must have questioned many people who had memories of their own. He has succeeded in adding a whole cluster of new stories. Almost all the intensely human stories, those which show the play and interplay of character, we owe to Luke. Matthew tells parables in which an impersonal sower or shepherd or householder seems like a mere lay figure upon which the teaching is displayed, but Luke's characters live in their own right, and are flesh and blood people whom we feel we know—Zacchæus, Martha and Mary, the good Samaritan, the group in the story of the prodigal, and others. Out of the wealth of material that was lying about, he selected according to his own humanistic type of mind. One wonders how many he left out simply because they did not appeal to a mind like his own.

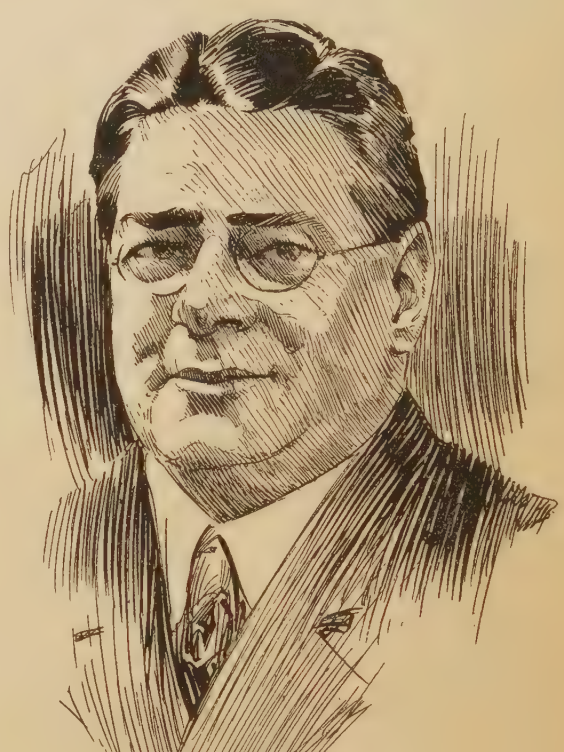
John gives us page after page of the sayings of Jesus which are entirely new to us. With him an incident is but a spigot to let flow a stream of wonderful talk. What talk it is! While critics discuss how and where John got it and even who and what was John himself, this talk feeds the souls of the simple and the profound.

Obviously then, Mark left out much that Matthew felt to be indispensable; both of them omitted much that to Luke was unspeakably precious; and John, after carrying the whole conception of Jesus to a dazzling height that leaves all other lives down in the plains, lays down his pen with a sigh, saying, "There are also many other things which Jesus did."

II

The second idea that seems to me to be embedded in this loose peroration of the evangelist's is that he is sure that the untold stories of Jesus would only amplify the impression already created. He has no fear that there may be something there which would take away from its force. There are hidden things, but not furtive things. There are too many to tell, but none that are unworthy to be told. These he hopes will be enough; for the rest there are no evil things lurking in the forest; there is only a pure reservoir which could indefinitely be drawn upon. There is nothing here that is screened or slurred over; silence is not a dark cloak which covers the anomalous.

It is an amazing attitude of mind for him to have



Frederick W. Norwood

reached. For one must remember that to spoil St. John's portraiture, no very terrible thing would be required. It would not be necessary to prove that Jesus had flagrantly broken the decalogue. We need not think of the ten great sins. Just to convict him of the foibles and fatuous banalities which belong to our poor human nature would drag him down from the sublime eminence upon which John sees him.

Consider the terms upon which Jesus lived. Here is no seclusion of any kind. Anyone who has been to Galilee, and seen those tiny little houses where privacy was scarcely possible, where windows were unknown except as openings for air and light, where all met in the market place or at the village well, will know how searching was the light that fell upon Jesus. It is true that we are told little or nothing about his early years, but I suspect the reason was that everybody knew all that was to be known. Save on his visits to Jerusalem, I am inclined to think that Jesus never traveled more than thirty miles from his home. Consider, too, those three years of unscreened intimacy with his disciples. Even love might be excused if without weakening its allegiance it extended tolerance, perhaps

amused tolerance, to its object. The sincerest love may smile genially over the recognition of a foible or a fault that may be but the shadow cast by a virtue.

Surely to have carried the intimate knowledge of one's best friends up to a height of faith in one's divinity that trembled into Godhood was the most unique thing that ever happened in this world.

I find myself standing before this loose peroration of St. John, which as a literary critic I am bound to criticize, with a wonder too deep for words. I am not moved by any supercilious critic; I listen to him, waiting only until he shall take his pompous shadow out of the sunlight. I am stirred to my very depths by the vision of a life which if everything within it were written that could be written would be undimmed in its radiance. Not everything was written that could have been written, but at this stage in history we have to say that everybody who cherishes the faith that God is supreme moral perfection feels bound to say that Jesus was his highest embodiment in this world of fallible human beings.

This is the tremendous historical fact around which the Christian church—itself composed of imperfect and widely diversified people—continually groups itself.

III

Perhaps I ought to stop at this point, but I am tempted to say one other thing: I suspect that St. John, although he had actually written the most wonderful book in the world, had a subconscious feeling that there are some things that can never be *written*. Every real writer knows that writing is a mere transference of something deeply personal for the eyes of others to read, and that in the process something is lost. The perfume escapes while the elixir is being poured forth. How few of us who read John see and feel as he did! The written word was never the ultimate word; it is only the kindling word.

Sometimes it is the word of bondage. "The letter killeth," said St. Paul, who was himself a man of letters; "the spirit giveth life." Written words and written creeds—how often they have been but tidal marks when the tide has long receded. Only the spirit of Christ, active in a man's heart, can truly interpret the Christ of whom so much cannot be written. Scholars we have in plenty; it is disciples who are rare.

You are writing a gospel,
A chapter each day,
By deeds that you do,
By words that you say.
Men read what you write,
Whether faithless or true;
Say, what is the gospel according to—You?

That is enough—but stay! The words have been seething in my mind all the week. I have only captured a little of their significance. "If they should be written every one." What man or woman among us could submit to a life record like that? The worst and the best we would want to withhold. Some things are too bad to write; and some, thank God, are too good. When you fell below your best—No, do not write that! When you rose above your highest achievement—No, you cannot write that!

Writing? How poor it is! It is for the suburbs of life, not for its citadel. It is for the forum, not for the sanctuary. There are no written books in the judgment day. God himself could not write them exactly enough. Only the eye seeing all in the Perfect Light can be cognizant both of things written and of things that never could be written. Then things that we could not have written because our tears would have blotted them out, may shine like stars, for stars they may be; visible because the garish light of the sun paled and the great things of God and the soul loomed out distinctly. Then the things that we could not have written because modesty forbade us, knowing its scanty achievement, may be seen to be the very word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. Not what a man does but what he fain would do—these, in the eyes of the All-seeing may constitute the real man.

The Divine Pledge

By Merton S. Rice

"Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1-6.

THERE is very great encouragement in the passage we separate here for a text, and in other similar passages which group themselves with kindred meaning about it, for the soul troubled in those truly difficult seasons when failure seems to mock our highest ambition. We are not so seriously impressed when we stumble along in slovenly defeat in the smaller and less marked intentions of life. But when we falter as we actually reach high; when we fail where we believe we are most worthy; when we stumble as we honestly endeavor to catch step with genuine nobility; when our ambition for the highest and holiest things must endure the mockery of defeat, just then there is truly a tonic to the fainting soul to find in the Book the recorded words of a companioning interest on the part of him who has promised to continue unto its completion that which he hath begun in us here.

The Psalmist, somewhere in one of the most fascinating phrases of all the psalms, has set the gleam of this fadeless star into whatever darkness the depressive sense of failure may throw about us, in these words, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me."

Lesser Abilities in Control

Just about as confounding a bit of experience as we ever have to face is to be denied the doing of the thing we really desire to do, and to be set at tasks we fairly loathe but cannot avoid because a living must be made. Frequently the lesser abilities have had the control of life, and the really fine elements have had to retire. David aspired to build the temple. That was the one great passion of his soul. He was, however, not allowed to do so, and he died with his supreme ambition denied.

Things written are for the eyes of our neighbors, but the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.

Not infrequently have there been souls among us who evidently miscalculated their real genius. We have had poets who aspired to paint. We have had painters who yearned to sing. We have had singers who longed to be orators. Just now we have one lovely singer who yearns to farm; but some others who insist on singing. All that is a strange field in human expression to let your thought run along. It has brought me to a most interesting conclusion.

It would be a tragedy of tragedies if humanity on this earth were to go down in a vast litter of unfinished ambitions. We are becoming used to the growingly great junk yards of things we have discarded. Someone has dared say a brave thing about what has often been charged against our extravagance as sinful waste, that the growing junk pile is sure evidence of our rapid progress; the ruck stands for our constant improvement. Unless we can catch some such spiritual interpretation of the so-called failures of life, we are due for some serious reflection as to what after all this abandonment of ideals does mean. It would be the very heartbreak of ambition itself, if we were to be led along its faltering path, and came to its close where, utterly undone, we were left with a huge pile of fragments, the broken monument of this unfinished human race. Yet, my immortal fellow pilgrims, that is exactly what we do find; and the crowding host of souls coming to the darkened exit of mortality we call a grave, where mortality strips them of their unfinished tasks, and tosses them all aside in huge junk heaps at the world's edge, is the end of the story of life, if this world knows it all.

UNFINISHED LIVES

There is a convincing sense of incompletion about man as registered here. He goes away and leaves his shop and his tools. His temple is unfinished. His ship is left to rot on the ways. His field is but partly plowed. His statue is but partly cut. His fortune is but partly made. Shakespeare and Cervantes on the same day laid down their skillful pens on unfinished lines and went away, and none has yet been found who could choose words to complete them. This world most truly presents to the historian a broken and an unfinished ideal of man. He is incomplete, if this be his whole story.

In all this, however, there exists for me a convincing argument for immortality. Fastened with an unbreakable purpose to this fact of failure, I find this pledge of our text as a divine promise for life just as we know it now, "He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it." Out of the fragments which, after all, have been the very best that we have been able to accomplish, God promises his own hand to the completion. Upon such an assurance I would raise confidence for every human soul that falls in faith into the hands of the eternal Architect.

My plans and my ideals forever outrun me. Do not mistake my statement. I do not boast. This is human, not personal. God knows I personally am ashamed of my littleness. I am poor, and weak, and unworthy. But he knows also that I do not desire so to be. My ideal is high. My hope is far-flung. My purpose is pure. My hunger is for righteousness. I bring these cardinal facts, even though I falter and fail to reach them, and lift them up to him as my ambition, anyhow. I pray for his help. I ask for his forgiveness. I petition for his patience. And amid it all, I thank God for my faith, that faltering though I may be, he stands pledged to perform in me that which I have been unable to finish.

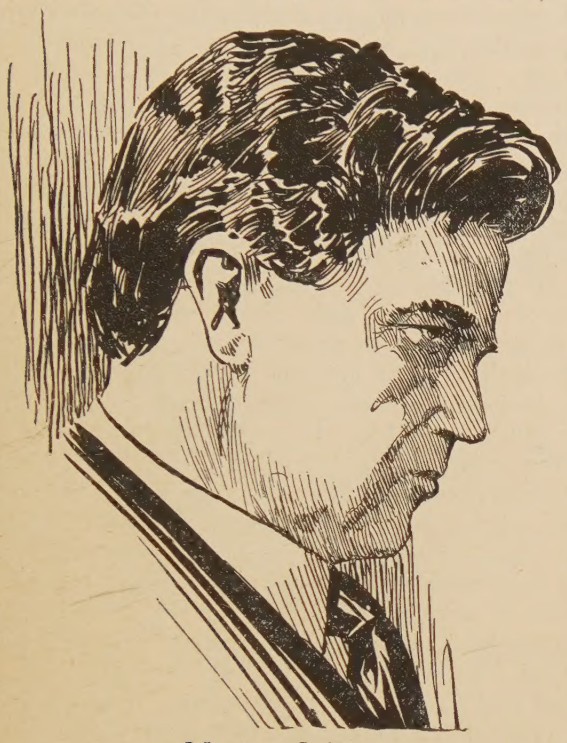
THE BOY DAVID

I have sat in never diminishing interest, and many times, before that marvelously beautiful statue of the young boy David, which Michelangelo gave to the world. It is always more than the statue that lures me to a seat before it. In Florence dwelt a young and ambitious sculptor whose flaming passion was to create from marble a genuine masterpiece that would make secure his name in the art story of all time. A rich friend surprised him one day by having brought to his studio a beautiful block of perfect marble, and mounting it in challenging waiting, told the young, ambitious sculptor to do his best. The young man was overwhelmed at the opportunity. He sat before it in contemplation. He dreamed before it. He prayed before it. One day when he believed the fire of his genius was really aflame, he picked up his chisel, and setting it against the beautiful opportunity only ruined it. With his ambition crushed, he walked away with prone head and died a not distant day, discouraged and heartbroken, because he had been denied his greatest ambition. The workmen dragged the ruined marble out and tossed it on the junk pile outside the city.

One day Michelangelo, seeing that block of cast off marble, ordered it brought to his studio. There the recovered broken thing was again subjected to an interpretation, and out of its brokenness, and above all it had meant in failure, the consummate genius of the great artist actually drew The Young Boy David, doubtless as faultlessly beautiful a thing as has ever been cut from white marble. I sometimes try to think that maybe the very failure of the young man, Baccellino, has contributed thus to the finest thing we have, and maybe Michelangelo only brought to a completion the dream of the denied youth. All this, of course, we can but lay our guesses at; but every time I have sat in that most fascinating place in Florence, and every time my mind returns to the scene, I see the illumination of the theme I am at here now. In some supremely great way our God brings his omnipotence to the falterings we make. And if our work be honestly done, though we be compelled to see it as but a fragmented failure, there yet rises before us this promise of God that he will perform it. The infinite interest of God in his people is our inestimably rich assurance.

The presence of this fact in life has left strong evidence along the human way. Some seemingly little matter has meen made to glow with convincing luster. Some unpretentious life has been made to greaten into mighty influence among us. The things we have failed

in our very best endeavor to do, God has brought unto completion in some inexplicable way. If the bread cast upon the waters shall return unto us after many days, how much more must we believe that the life cast into the sea of time shall find care and divine conservation on the shores of eternity in him who does not overlook even the fall of a sparrow. We all need, and



MERTON S. RICE

need always, an interpretive faith that will not shrink. There is within all this a well grounded argument that the building up of the lives of God's people is an assumed responsibility of God. This does not diminish my personal responsibility, nor offer me the lure of a false ease that would lazily shuffle my utmost endeavor upon any other shoulders. But it brings to me the infinitely encouraging assurance that my God and I stand together.

"SO LITTLE DONE"

I would bring the refreshment of such an assurance to every soul to whom life seems to have brought denial. I see that host across the ages whose unrealized ideals in mortal endeavor must, under such a philosophy of faith, be thus a sure prophecy of what is yet to be. The Christian religion deepens in us all, as time streams on, the feeling not only that life as we have it here is good, and in itself is really a treasure for which we should be constantly happy: but infinitely more, in that our unrealized possibilities are the sure prophets of a higher condition yet to be. Only seldom, markedly seldom, along the way of the billions of human lives here, do we come face to face with some defiant Paul, who can fling triumphantly back to us as he goes away in death, "I have finished my course." Beyond even that defiant declaration, he goes on to tell of the crown awaiting him. But the scarcity of such triumphant confidence makes the last words of Cecil Rhodes carry a more general application: "So much to do, so little done." That sounds like humanity. Incompleted purpose is the ordinary, so ordinary as to seem the only, conclusion we must draw. Frustrated ambition is the human refrain. The larger the soul the larger the reach for the ideal. Great Alexander made bold to reach for a whole world; and when at last his wearied but victorious armies came marching home to report that he had it all, he sat down in dissatisfied possession to weep for more worlds.

The fact we are at now is too big a fact to be fulfilled by any attainment we may be able upon this earth to make. This note sounds hauntingly through the whole human story. Man is deep struck. He never seems complete. He is wounded just where he shows at his best. There, where he seems to be most a man and least an animal, he must suffer most. His most cruel disappointment lurks along his highest way, and, unless we can find some sane explanation for this severe fact, we are to be left with the very finest sentiment arising in our souls made the mockery of the very worst. It is squarely before that crucial fact that I would bring this contention of my faith now worded by our great text, "God will perform it."

WHO HAS NOT FAILED?

Who is there among us who does not stand in need of such an assurance? Who has not failed? Who will dare lift a self-confident head and profess no need of God? My plans all work! My plantings all mature! My harvests are all garnered! My ideals are all realized! The sheer egotism of such suggestion flies back into our faces at its very mention. The fact stares at us that we fail often at our best places. We break under our ideals. So little is done where we had hoped for so much. Mere plans remain. The hewn stone of realization we have not been able to lay up.

There are, in the world as a whole, more folks today who seem to be able to qualify in some degree of self-expression than at any other period in the world's story. But the very vast multitude of us are souls who have been and are right now unable to express life, even as we can see it to be. We are strangely mute, yet yearning to sing. I know a good and gracious man with a responsive soul who suffered paralysis of the throat, and could not speak. His struggle to say what was in his soul, by eager eyes and grasping hand and heaving breast, but voiceless, was a pitiful figure among us. The other day, from our church, we buried the little, crumpled, mortal form wherein had dwelt for long a wonderful soul. Her poor, broken, twisted body was a prison house for her yearning spirit. She dearly loved the church. She would hold out, on her bent and almost useless arm, her tiny, crumpled, tender hand, and we feared to grasp it, so pain-wracked it was. She used to be so glad if privileged to mingle with our young folks and hear their songs and laughter, and see their glad ways together as Christian youth. Then when she would find herself alone in her room, to think life in her own terms, she used to say, "I would look at my hands." With all her unfaltering love of and trust in God, she never had anything

better on this earth than that little broken form. I know how discouragingly hard such a life must be to live, and how infinitely easier it must be to die out of it than to steadfastly live in it. But after all, like the plaintive tone of some strange instrument that awakens a rare flavor in the orchestra when it sounds its note, so may these lives of ours, each and all, contribute to the great human symphony when the Master blends them all.

IMPERFECTIONS IN THE PERFECT

Standing on the pavement beneath that high-hung wonder in architecture, the dome of St. Peter's cathedral in Rome, I was deeply impressed with the great mosaics with which it is adorned. I have stood in admiration under that marvelously beautiful dome by the hour. One day, with an old guide, I made my toiling way, round and round, and up and up, until I came out at a tiny door near the top of it all, upon a little platform, in the very midst of the mosaics I had marveled at. I was astonished. I almost protested to the guide for deceiving me. I said, "You have brought me to the wrong place. This is not what I was looking at. I saw marvelous mosaics. This is rough, crude work of jagged stones." When I had finished my protest the guide said quietly, "This is what you were looking at. Down there is where you stood. You have miscalculated this vast dome, that is all. See this rough stone here! The shadow of its roughness on this side and on that makes up part of the impressive beauty of the mosaics you saw from below. The very roughness of it has much to do with its perfect impression!" When I had made my way back again to my place on the pavement, and looked once more at those particular bits I had actually touched, I saw then how the imperfections I had complained of were participant in the perfection of the whole. Let us not fail to fit the artistic fact of the dome into those vaster realms into which our lives are set.

I shall most certainly leave all this unto the higher conclusions of God. Wreck and ruin even, as I may call them on lower grounds, may prove contributive parts of perfection on a higher plane! Suffering in the coarser materials of our personality will work out a beauty for the finer elements. Loss, and even death, find their compensation in the ripened joy and accomplished glory of the enduring spirit, and we press right on, believing, and waving our belief as a banner, that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." What we had at first believed to be the crooked lines of God have become the master strokes of the supreme and eternal genius.

THE UNFINISHED CHURCH

Let me note also the tone of confidence which this fact of our faith puts into the cause of the church. Its best made plans, and its most devoted followers, are often broken, insulted and mocked in their allegiance to high ideals. We are at this very hour passing through a period when the best ideals of Christian living are being mocked by a rampant materialism. The highest standards of Christian conduct are being laughed at by many so-called social standards that would make sport of virtue and shun the holiness of life to which we are called. Perhaps there is, right now, no greater need among us than a great revival of Christian conduct. All down the ages, the church in its rigid espousals and plans, has been opposed by the courted freedom of a sinful indulgence. But the church has neither been slain nor halted. The story is inspiring. The Church of our Lord Jesus Christ has certainly had to suffer disaster. If someone would some day go carefully back along the staggering story of the church and list the defeats as men reckon defeats, it would most certainly seem to be a convincing report to bring that, in spite of all we have suffered, the church is still here.

All this, however, is strangely interwoven in the fact of our assumed task. Our ideals are vast. We have set ourselves to eternal issues. The very greatness of the involved program makes failure noticeable. An institution of low purpose does not have to suffer the collapse of defeat. It has nothing to establish.

But amid it all the Church of Christ does come on. Through every opposition and above all the keen cutting criticism there is an attendant triumph which has ever characterized her. Framing her songs even amid the martyrdom of her heroes, she has ever tuned her appeal of recruit, "Who follows in their train?" Her failures have succeeded. Her defeats have been garlanded. The Church of Christ has been killed only to come forth in new resurrection power. I believe it to be a part of God's program. He is never disheartened. His zeal never abates. We take our confident stand beside our God to declare, as his church, that "we are confident that he who hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

FAITH AND DEATH

The confidence such a promise justifies should strengthen every believer. We may be girded with trouble, but we are sure of our defense. Floods may rise against us, but in him we will be confident. I take my stand beside life, whatever it now may be, and before whatever it may yet become, and declare my faith that nothing can change the issue. The past may be sacred to sorrow, the future is just as sacred to hope. Death is but a portal in an eternal progression. Our faith simply will not be shaken. We walk triumphantly without concern of the path, knowing beyond it all that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The promise of human life has been set aglow in the eternal meaning of this great divine pledge. Let us bring ourselves to him in perfect confidence that even though we may have marred and broken our ideals by imperfect living, yet he, even beyond all that may mean, stands pledged to complete the good work begun, but broken, in our lives.

Thus looking within and around me, I ever renew,
With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it, too,
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all complete.

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

I AM ALREADY finding great delight in editing a periodical for ministers. I have always coveted such a task. The Christian Century is widely read by ministers all over the English speaking world, but it is not a preacher's magazine. It keeps in mind the *churchman* as such, whether he be layman or clergyman. And one of our deepest satisfactions is to watch the extending list of thoughtful laymen who find in The Christian Century the kind of discussion of religious ideas and events which they have long desired.

But this new periodical whose first issue the reader holds in his hands is for ministers alone. No doubt many laymen would be interested in it if it were offered for general circulation, but its purpose will be better served if editor and contributors and readers keep in mind its limitation to the circle of the church's ministry. That purpose is to bring inspiration to ministers and to raise the standard of preaching by presenting the best sermonic utterances of the contemporary pulpit.

The function of the editor will be for the most part behind the scenes. But this single page has been reserved for me to do with as I will. My modest space will be divided into three parts each month in which I will offer a personal comment on the *Event* of the month, the *Book* of the month, and a *Thought* for the month.

I will be forgiven, I feel sure, if I choose The Christian Century Pulpit as itself the event of this month. Other months, other events. But if one may judge by the words of congratulation and gratitude which have been elicited by the advance announcement, there can be no doubt that the birth of The Christian Century Pulpit is a truly significant event. The publishers tell me that the very first issue will go to more than 20,000 charter subscribers! That display of *faith* challenges us to be worthy of such confidence. We shall not be satisfied until the new periodical is found on the study table of at least 75,000 of the 100,000 ministers in American and Canadian Protestantism.

I have two special ideals I hope I may have grace to carry through to the end. One is to keep the new periodical free from the illusion of great names. Men of fame and station will here speak their messages. But we are determined that this periodical shall be a *finder* of great preachers. An unrecognized preacher whose message is significant will have the same chance to be heard in these pages as will the most conspicuous pulpiteer. We shall select *sermons*, not *preachers!* The invitation to submit manuscripts is therefore all-inclusive. One pastoral prayer will appear in each issue. And it is our wish that manuscripts of prayer may be freely submitted also.

The other special purpose is to exhibit a wide and generous hospitality to ministers of all denominations, all sections of the country, and all schools of thought. The Christian Century Pulpit will not be the voice of any party or school, conservative or liberal, high church, low church, or broad church. It will strive to be in its contents as rich and varied, as inclusive and catholic, as the many-sided, many-talented Christian ministry itself.

The Book of the Month

WHAT does a minister think about—when he is at a funeral, at the bedside of the sick, at a church convention, at a ministers' meeting, at a Kiwanis club, in a conference with capitalists, in a conference with labor leaders, in his study preparing a sermon, in the pulpit delivering it, when he receives a call to another pastorate or to a teaching position, when he "puts on" an every member canvass, when he stands before his young men's Bible class, when he takes his first pastorate, when he goes to a "revival meeting," when he dons the pulpit gown, when he "sits in" at a typical smoking room conversation in a Pullman car, when some "heavy" contributor to his church suggests that he preach thus and so, when he preaches to soldiers in camp, when he visits the battlefield, when the newspaper reporter comes for an interview, when his members do not come to the services—what does a minister think about in the hundred and one situations where professional manners conceal his real thoughts?

The inner side of the minister's mind, the real human feelings of the minister—how little do we know of one another, and how few of us take pains even to know ourselves! Reinhold Niebuhr graduated from Yale Divinity School and took a modest pastorate in Detroit. During thirteen years he shepherded his flock, built a new church, identified himself with every moral and spiritual enterprise of the great city, held conferences with students in colleges all over the country, passed through the tension and tragedy of the war—and all this time he kept a notebook, writing down his own reflections. These reflections have been published in a book with the cryptic title, "LEAVES FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF A TAMED CYNIC."

I have this book on my desk. I read it through at one sitting though it spoiled the better part of a night, and I pick it up again and again to sharpen and refresh—and to chasten—my own mind. Niebuhr comes as near "debunking" himself as any man I ever read after. He has a huge capacity for sincerity. You can't fool him, and he is determined not to fool himself.

It is a grave responsibility to select one book—just one—out of the interminable list of recent books that deserve reading, and to say to all ministers everywhere

that this is the most important book for them for this month. But I do say precisely that. This book is good for laymen too, but it is so good for ministers that I am impelled to call it indispensable—indispensable if you wish to see the inner side of the mind of a modern young minister who is a keen analyst of human nature, a thoughtful student of church and society, and a man who is trying to take Jesus Christ seriously.

A Thought for the Month

WHEN I first read the manuscript of Joseph Fort Newton's contribution to this issue of The Christian Century Pulpit I was so startled when I came upon his phrase, "the awful privacy of the pulpit," that for the moment I could read no further. The phrase has haunted me ever since, as I am sure it will haunt the mind of every minister who reads that striking discourse on "The Sermon." What a door of insight it opens into the paradox of preaching. This most public relationship is, after all, the most intimate, the most private, contact between soul and soul which can be imagined. No face-to-face conversation so completely unveils personality. Even the rarest friendship or the purest love is not more private. At their best love and friendship have their inhibitions, their reserves, their little pretensions.

But the pulpit is the essence of privacy. From the minister—whether he be functioning as preacher or priest—there is a direct line of contact with the innermost heart of every worshiper. And the response, needing no verbal or overt expression, is unimpeded by any necessity for prudence.

To the minister in his pulpit is accorded, as to no other public speaker or teacher, the right to deal with the deepest, the tenderest, the most holy facts of people's inmost lives. Their response brings them to judgment—not before him, nor before their neighbors who sit round about them, nor before the loved ones who sit beside them, but every man is brought to judgment before the invisible bar of his own conscience. Overt response is not only unnecessary at the moment, but indecorous. The situation is organized essentially for privacy. This is one reason why a sensitive, high-minded minister wishes, by a sound instinct, to come directly from the privacy of his own study into his pulpit. He is about to stand in a unique relationship to the souls of men. He cannot assume this intimate function in a light or casual mood. He must be in the spirit of it in advance.

The pulpit is not only private but its privacy is shot through with awe. Here is the true confessional. The minister's prayer is not just *his* prayer—he reaches out and takes from the hearts of his people the things they most deeply yearn for, the smothered, hidden, forgotten things of their inarticulate selves—privacies they never could confess to a priest at a screened auricle—and announces them boldly in the presence of God. None save God hears. Even the minister does not hear!

Charles Clayton Morrison

Christian Century BOOK SERVICE
440 S. Dearborn St.
CHICAGO

We pay postage
We give Participating Coupons
We give credit
One Order — One Bill
Prompt Shipment
Satisfaction Guaranteed

Books are ministers' tools!

Where do you go for information about books? You can't read everything. You haven't the time, even if you have the money! THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY BOOK SERVICE offers a well rounded service to its customers. Its judgment rests not on the opinion of one man. It combines the best judgment of the editors of The Christian Century *plus* the judgment of many book reviewers *plus* a definite knowledge of the mind of our customers. We select and describe only the more important volumes published each month, and let you choose from them the ones you want.

Two things, may we suggest:

(1) Send us your order, now, for a copy of Niebuhr's "Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic." (Price $2.00.)

(2) Send us your name and address to be placed on our mailing list for our monthly *Book Service Broadcast,* which will give you, each month, the really important books of that month's publication. No charge!

The Book Order Coupon below is for your convenience.

Christian Century Pulpit Subscription Order Coupon

The Christian Century Pulpit,
440 So. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Gentlemen:
Please enter my name as a subscriber to The Christian Century Pulpit for one year. I am (I am not) a present subscriber to The Christian Century.
☐ I enclose $2.00 herewith.
☐ I will remit $2.00 on receipt of bill.

My Name—Rev.....

Address .....

Combination Subscription Order Coupon

The Christian Century Pulpit,
440 So. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Gentlemen:
Please enter my name as a subscriber to The Christian Century *and* The Christian Century Pulpit for one year. For my convenience will you please see that both subscriptions start at the same time?
☐ I enclose $4.00 herewith.
☐ I will remit $4.00 on receipt of bill.

My Name—Rev.....

Address .....

Book Order Coupon

The Christian Century Book Service,
440 So. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.
Gentlemen:
Please send me a copy of
LEAVES FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF A TAMED CYNIC.
☐ I enclose $2.00 herewith.
☐ Charge to my account and send me bill. I will remit promptly.

My Name.....

Address .....
☐ Please send me, without charge, your October issue of the "Book Service Broadcast."